

J. F. HENDRY

The  
Bombed Happiness

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ROUTLEDGE

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To  
MOTHER AND DAD

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## *LJUBLJANA IN WINTER*

NOW the tree is pruned  
Bird buries head in wing.  
The song I should have sung  
Dies out of sounding.

Leaves, that distilled thought  
Like single startled birds,  
Stumble images and words  
In seaweed alphabet.

Branches are at war,  
Pointing different ways  
Like scarecrows in the snows  
Through which none can steer.

## *EUROPE, 1939*

CAST in a dice of bones I see the geese of Europe  
Gabble in skeleton jigsaw, and their haltered anger  
Scream a shark-teeth frost through splintering earth and lips.  
In the cauldron of Kells I hear man-future, fingering  
War and winter, barb a world in snow and baptise troops.

Thunder and the blood shout fight to the head in a dream ;  
Rat seed, and strangle harvests in the burning shadows  
Where our arteries of wire shroud weed for squinting limbs,  
And a lopped head, held up like a heart, crushed root and  
bloody  
Brandishes strands of flesh, the fruit of a coughing womb.

Shall hands, I ask, clasp visionary on branches bathed  
In bells distilling valley peace where pears are ripe ?

In place of pears the sandbags fall like plums across my path.  
The trench that hides a seed of life may be its grave, trapped  
Darkness where some ghostly statesman takes the pulse of  
death.

Fear alone deals death to truth and hurls the dead like mud  
Into a wind whose rain, a blood, soaks through the secret.  
Secrets in the heart tear out the jangling entrails lions hide.  
Their unbelief is death, and all these dead now walk up out  
Of my speech of hands where love and living plead and  
bleed.

### *LAMENT FOR POLAND*

THIS sorrow's magnitude makes mockery of gesture.  
No sympathy showered from balconies of intellect restores  
These fields to innocence.  
Corn and coloured kerchief of the gleaners there  
Are blotted out in a night of blood and stars  
Of grief, or fight in every conscience.

This peasant's sacrifice, the price of Europe's  
Cowardice, acknowledges no conqueror.  
He is sole heir  
Of silent acres none can till, or even enter.  
Holy alone for Poland are his tears.  
Holy alone for Poland is his hope.

### *KALEMEGDAN: BEOGRAD, 1939*

THESE turrets, crags and bastions castle a world in ruin,  
Through the hollow tooth of a continent, nerve and body  
gone,  
My plundered sarcophagus.

Between bricks the blow-flies burrow, and the grape rears  
Black and strangled nipples to a frost of rifles where  
The bayonets hang like ice.

Unseen, sun and shadow sift a forest from these walls  
And the river moves toward heaven, whose nationless rain  
    writes pools  
For epitaphs on Roman cerements.

All war and counter-war shall break here, at this rock—  
Where water and sand and wind and sun make a rock  
Of man, to strike through barb and torment.

### *CORNWALL*

**A**LL the fallen horizons of waves  
Purse upon the land gray lips  
Whose lines are lines of distance and infinity.

Little white rats run, generations of invasion, while  
Rivers are remorselessly shattered over  
The stacked rock's black mysterious battlements,

Riddled needles that shroud no ghost  
Save the sea's mist, sailing inland  
Like one vast fleet of sail. Where, heavily, soil

Clings to the cliff with unsure fingers  
And no birds sing, this broken earth is tribute to its men  
Who ploughed precarious civilisation to the verge

Of sudden precipice, seen only  
By the stone-coloured pipit, in a copper land,  
Though scorned by time and all the elements' confusion.

## LONDON BEFORE INVASION, 1940

WALLS and buildings stand here still, like shells,  
Hold them to the ear. There are no echoes even  
Of the seas that once were. That tide is out  
Beyond the valleys and hills.

Days dawn and die, while the city assumes a distance of stars.  
It is the absence of the heart  
In the ebbing seas of heaven,  
An ebbing beyond laughter and too tense for tears.

Now, imagination floats, a weed, on water's vacancy.  
Faces of women, lit with conscience past or future  
Of men gone, wear one garland of stone features.  
Flowers have a girl's irrelevance, and mind is no prescience.

Flood-tides returning may bring with them blood and fire,  
Blanching with wet panic spirit that must be rock.  
May bring a future tossed and torn, as slippery as wrack.  
All time adrift in torrents of blind war.

## FOR THE U.S.S.R.

STRIDING down the blue starred midnight lawns  
Over silvery levels of domed rivers,  
Comes like a flush on the face of a woman, dawns  
On our ashen cities, calming their salvoes of shivers,  
The blown artillery song along your lighthouse  
Front, where walls of death fall crushed as waves,  
And burning trumpets, speaking voluminous light,  
Break into needles and angels the trees and the graves.

A blue column of grapes climbing the blind horizon  
Through leaves of laurel into a halo of sweet rain,  
Plant the grenades, O violet Amazon,  
No flood of ancestral tears shall drown Ukraine.  
Your brother ghosts, opaque in the opal snows,  
Breathe a life of knives through the dry bones of man's  
penury,  
And the great army of Leningrad stands up like a rose  
Hanging out thunderous thorn flowers fire, wire and fury.

No automatic death stuttering out the last silence  
Chills the Holy Men of Kiev lying amongst the guns.  
No rat at the conscience, nor loud Laertes violence  
Effaces the ruins of Austria or the dead Asturians,  
But Kalmuck and Circassian, Turki, Cossack and Tatár,  
Break the world asunder to unite it at the Pole,  
And, battling for the heart, the free U.S.S.R.  
Strikes lightning through the shuttles of the soul.

### *ODE ON A CHINESE SCROLL*

O, INARTICULATE China,  
We, the figures painted on your scroll,  
Witness a London shored by the Yang-Tze,  
An India standing upon Bataan,  
The globe become the soul.

Shall we have no pity  
Since pity's eye may not encompass  
The vast Sargasso of human misery ?  
Because pity is not enough  
Shall we be pitiless ?

Until this banner wave through every soul  
Growing outward till it fill the earth  
Neither here nor in interstellar space  
Shall gentleness and peace  
Brighten the world with their birth.

Our truth and beauty  
Speak with the tongues of flags. Shall they be furled ?  
Shall brutality and lie bring them dumb  
To the scaffold of the centuries  
O nation whose tears are the rivers of the world ?

## *MIDNIGHT AIR-RAID*

BEYOND our factories, like caterpillars curled in a sham death,  
Rivers signal their quicksilver treachery : and, in answer,  
The guns of midnight pound from roots of earth  
Bombarding with their radium mouth and prong of  
cancer  
Eating out the lungs of countries in a bubble of bloody  
breath.

Sensitive fingers of searchlights pick the pockets of dark.  
These are surgeons' pitiless forceps imprisoning in their  
grip

Anaerobic death, there, in the heart of air, lurking  
To burst the harmless tissues of cities. It is an antiseptic  
In this world of blood, with an unsuspecting child, the  
dawn, forgotten larks.

Now sirens unleash civilian anguish. In a reflex, they  
Stumble from an underworld of dreams whom abortive  
desire

(Pillared in moonlit limbs) makes gray.

Freedom's involuntary fighters, knowing no refuge save in  
fiery

Consciousness, rampant light and the resolution of day.

Night that sealed their visions, drained all thought an hour  
Ago, is now their bodyguard ; but real defence is an  
illumination,

Ally of the sun, and fills their brain with staggering power  
Where sanity tremors on madness, to beat down explosion  
Of wind and the thunder's stupor, in a turbulent under-  
ground anger.

Here artist and scientist concur to admire  
A formal pattern of battle, where herring-bone squadrons  
Elude the swaying bars of light, and white fire  
From London's living furnace, flung up like a tilted cauldron,  
Splits the atom of doom ; and makes man's floodlit march  
one endless gyre.

### *LAMENT FOR A GENERATION*

**N**OW the bones of many are the flutes of death  
Wind pipes its laughter where the marrow was.  
Its whistle is the emptiness of grief.  
Our splitting days pitch like a ship that is piled  
Upon reefs ; and every second springs a hole  
Through which the waters of our lives rise in a trough.  
Screened, we see the future in a haze  
Of images, that sharpen into truth,  
Foresigning sore experience and the frost  
Of anger, till the cold cruel vision of the coming time is  
focussed.

This grief is a spiked plant, dabbled with dorsal fins ;  
Distiller of sorrow ; action grown barren ; war.  
Scattering wide his tears, the airman tends  
In vegetable bombs the roots of his own grief.  
He weeps wild emptiness who sheds his blood.  
Hands, limbs, mechanically bound,  
Lose purpose in this path, ploughs sunken in a drift,  
The long choked furrow we inherit, fear.  
These are the ghostly cacti beg alms from the rains  
Or barb an armoured ambush for sweet wells of God.

Still, a man in Galilee, whose seas know no division,  
Walks the waves of reconciliation with his love ;

With his blood and with his tears treads down  
Fountains of green vengeance. Bodily one  
With the peal of bells, from the tower of his heart on  
the hill

Are tolling, tolling, sounds of joy throughout  
All exploration's gardens. Yet the blood-beaked ravens  
Build foreboding nests within our minds,  
Or harbour doom and prophesy his fate  
And ours, the living embodiment of his wounds.

### *THE REFLEX OF HISTORY*

GRAPPLING with the forces of ages, iron  
Invisible wrestlers grip them in a vice.  
Struggling against the harshness of the blood  
None can deny the agony they live.  
"None! None!" the four winds bluster; and "Oh no!"  
The constant waters stammer in their head.  
Surely spirits distortion can never be driven  
Further than this? The lover's kiss touched by the frost  
to a hiss?

All their days shall be December. Years  
Roll crumpled toward them through a blacked-out dawn  
Like mists of an evil vapour, and their dew is arsine.  
Marching these men know without knowledge, see without  
vision.  
Death's boots down an endless lane drown hearing  
Dog's mockery: cock's pride: richness of beggars, or  
wonder  
Of trees' concentration outlive their thunder,  
Who peer into a world of guttering fear through gas-mask  
tears.

Dissimulation's madmen, damming up the mind,  
They march us wilfully back upon primeval  
Memory. Though some willingly leave all  
They know behind to follow the drumming wind,  
All lose a sense of touch with the living and real,  
All are lost in a labyrinthine terror and a Hell.

### ON GUARD

BECALMED, the night came suddenly brimming  
Over with voices, like a pool  
Where fishes leap, all inarticulate and dumb.  
I heard the late birds, sheep and lovers still  
In the eloquence of delight  
Announce their low complaint of day's demand,  
The harshness of its light.

The haze of night was suddenly lit  
By many moons, when, shortening their beams,  
Searchlights for a moment dimmed  
The random stars and fumbled on, but  
Cast no shine upon the earth,  
Inspired no future,  
Myth or dream, in heart or hearth.

### VIEW

THOUGH the leaves crowd, in galaxies of shaken stars,  
Driving toward my window like a clipper-ship,  
I turn away. In our society  
Men demand surfeit of food, a place to sleep.  
We cannot learn from leaves to live on air.

Though flowers are without desire, and all fruit falls soon  
after  
Fellowed, we live fearfully, hoard ourselves in lovers.  
Our societies are not trees.  
Nor have we joy like these tempestuous shivering leaves, or  
Their collaboration of bells in untold laughter.

### *CHURCHILLIAN ODE*

THE years grew tares for we did not tend them.  
Time was eaten by moths in an age of gold  
And the sun eclipsed in a cloud of ignorance.  
The hours sprang holes as we stared, until now, the last,  
We clasp in our hands a sheaf of bluebells in place  
Of the rifle, and all our moments of laughter are frozen  
Amid flaming towns, their echoes chill as the shadow of  
soul's vengeance.

I bring you no song, no troubadour, but a hymn  
Of embattled fury and anthems of fortitude to beat back  
Piebald panic, calculation's treachery, lunacy's assault,  
The seven fretful seas of disloyalty and abdication in high  
places.

I offer you inspiration in crates of munitions. My poems are  
Cool water to drink in bomb-craters. I erect wires of  
barbed  
Speech in action to cripple the deliberate hunter of human  
freedom.

You will pardon us, Hitler, if perhaps our laughter is red.  
If your soldiers, laughing with us, choke, and halt  
As the blood bubbles trumpets in their throats. You will  
Certainly pardon the laughter you launched as slaughter.

We still have a mind toward sun and essential joy, although  
Giants carouse and skirl on our reeling horizon's fire.  
You will pardon this soldier's Belgian doll, and those who  
fought in flowers.

I might recite the names of cities with the culture of the  
tongues

Of centuries: Wien: Praha: Warszawa: Rotterdam:  
towns murdered

Like fair women by a cut-purse snuffing the crumbs of ruin,  
Recite to no purpose. For Amiens burns to-day and Paris  
to-morrow.

Time is afire with terror in the forest of our streets and  
Eloquence marshals clearings arresting death's advance,  
Cuts channels, floods dykes, builds a citadel for a people in  
arms.

Though all the air is calamitous with weeping, O Hitler,  
Silt of your wreckage, an ambition's debacle, and the debris  
Piles inanity upon insanity too torn for the mind to under-  
stand—

Yet I hear our horns at sea blare troopships.

I listen where whispers of victory drown the sirens of anguish,  
And through the fog of murderous dreams  
Drifting up, acrid and brown, I see the merciful,  
Miraculous dissolution of bombast and lust, in an elemental  
Marlborough.

#### *SONNET IN WARTIME*

THEY remember no cross, although they uproot rails  
To forge from fingers swords, and fire from the looted sight.  
They remember no hammer, no hands shod with nails  
In the hawk-eyed rifle and beak of the bayonet

Stabbing and stabbing again through bloody holes  
Into the water of victory. Forsaking the sun  
For mirage and shadow of imagined hells,  
Armed with an ass's jawbone, how shall they win :

Remembering no thorns thrust on any forehead  
They press the pitiful face in an iron rim.  
Although the years remember, and the rails,

The nails, the hammer and rifle beat in the temples loud  
Still they have no memory. The heart is dead.  
The blood is choked with thorn. They have killed Him.

### *THE BOMBED HAPPINESS*

**B**RING me, O morning, a branch whose roots are  
silence.  
Wring from the living shapes of trees a breakwater  
Scattering, blind and dumb, the white storms of a future  
Loud with barren voices. None shall influence  
The shy one, wild and wordlessly weaving a way  
Among heart's foliage, to plunge, inspired,  
Down upon love's awareness like a bird.

Here no seasons surge. Although the leaves fall,  
Numbering the deaths of those unknown to history,  
This year they tell no mere autumnal story.  
Calm summery courage is the ghost that haunts each  
house  
Of brick or bone. Behind an old man's daze of eyes  
Spring lurks, dew poised within a bud of tears.  
There is no winter known to human will.

Now the proud may scamper to hide their pride.  
Man's heart alone asserts death's insignificance.  
The sun's hour halts, and time is one vast cloud.  
Joys even in giant endeavour crack like bells  
Despite tongue's eloquence. Whole cities fall.  
And yet, O acting dry-rot on the tyranny of the times  
The silence of the mad and bombed is its own balm.

### *POEM IN STORM*

LOUD and symptomatic, sound  
The gong of winter's clamour.  
Swords of snow in the wind's hands  
Strike through all our armour.

This is the land where no words come  
Except in the shape of things,  
A world where the truth is dumb  
And blood the arbitrer of wrongs.

Pound in the crucible nest and petal,  
Branches shipwrecked on a sea of leaves.  
Men are garnered now for sheaves  
In war that is the winter of the soul.

### *THE FOUR SEASONS OF WAR*

“IT is the time to speak.  
It is the time to break  
As the prisms of the seasons break  
Up seas in rains and visions. . . .”

## AUTUMN

FLOOD is upon us. Furies illimitable cast  
Chaos of green blade florid with mud across  
My thumbnail landscape, where the ground and grass,  
Two giants in tunic of khaki and green gaiters,  
Scissor and blind all eyes that have beheld.  
See this wrinkled tree, faith floating drowned  
In the welter and clash of heedless, head-on waters,  
Inert and dead as any seasoned soldier.  
Never is destruction enough to halt the hunger of war's  
wintering wind.  
Nor shall time's end unravel, spaced like stars, its wreck  
and holocaust.

Misted visions, guilt of statesmen and rabble,  
Rob us of mind, breath, body and blood, to mint  
This ruthless purity, this camouflage of world where  
Futility multifold breathes fog over all rock :  
Still Charles, fond friend and web of awareness, quick  
Limbs like lilies skirting the lips of trenches, or  
Pupils like nuts of autumn hanging ripe with melancholy.  
On some beach of suffering his face is shaken like pebbles :  
And that deception of all fire is his thought smudged,  
    whorled and bludgeoned, wholly  
Betrayed, as he is beaten, lifeless, back upon all our own  
    four elements.

## WINTER

ANSWERLESS as winter is this history, where maps  
Of Europe curl like so many copper  
Leaves by the edge of accidental water-  
Falls, blown into everlasting might-have-been.  
I look up through the tree that shielded men  
With its belief and see the foliage scatter,

Driven in windy currents down the silent hall  
Of destiny. In a night of sleet the innumerable flakes  
Are Dead—whose memory stings us in the face like hail.

Each of us carries this winter's kernel within,  
Whose winds envisage us, ploughing furrows of doom,  
And rouse advancing breakers into violence. Then  
Courage droops like a bud in the frosted calm  
Of self-regard. This should be pruned and thrown  
aside.

With none to teach us action or wishes' significance  
From hour to hour we string across chasms of chance  
Pontoon bridges to a provisional world  
Where war is the only gardener and energy is whirled,  
Unchannelled aggression, loose in vacancy like a scythed  
wheel in the void.

#### SPRING

YET some tumbling homeward sea, in a green spring,  
Tides us over widths of dawn and heaven.  
Imponderable, immeasurable, bluer and bluer,  
Opening like a whole world's flowering.  
Here, in frozen waves, outlawed ubiquity, linger  
Trees whose bark remembers currents from caverns  
Of coiled time. On a shore and shingle of ice,  
Over fields of mist and the white grass,  
Her buds stand in the leaf-scar, and her sprays of  
innocence  
Break through the broken heart their snowdrops of  
remembrance.

Joyous billows throwing up light hills  
Wrestle delight from the stern frost wars hold  
Like a sword over hours time ceaselessly distils.

Titanic tumult, mastered in a breath,  
Melts the ice of bayonets. Formality withers,  
Shattering man's gigantic iceberg—death.  
Even earth and moon float in their wake  
As they spread invisible wings. Drowned in opacity  
We flee winter and the midnight tent quick as the bold  
Colossal stride of light divinity. Stars and flowers shake.

### SUMMER

**S**NOW banks the garden with its arabis.  
Far out upon its seas white seagulls loop  
The magic of white mimicry in trellised  
Circles of incandescence and creation  
Sung through hives of blue in the honeyed air.  
Throughout man's temples sound the seasons' bells,  
And ghosts of silence, loud in bomb reverberation,  
Assassins of summer in these breathless chancels,  
Swirl to his assault. Yet still the long and haunting waves  
swoop  
Upon listening ears the peace of shining and inviolate shores.

Girdling our breaking patience, dawn in the blood  
Brings revelation in invisible flashes  
From the roots of night whose tendrils are hope in the  
heart  
Polar with intuitions, the Northern Lights.  
Though the world is not the heart it forever crushes  
Shattered, into spontaneous summer lightning,  
What is made of it may one day be the heart  
Since clouds purge head and beard as white as bread  
In this volcano's lava, food we need, the food of good  
We soon shall eat, ambrosia of age consumed when we are  
dead.

“It is the time to speak.  
It is the time to break  
As confident tides break  
And as the wind speaks out its mind.”

### *QUESTION AND ANSWER*

HOW we could ever have come to this pass ?  
Is all we are asking. Each of our  
Bursts of anti-aircraft fire  
Hangs a torn wound of questions in the air.

How we could ever, like cattle at grass,  
Drift with shadowless clouds, unaware,  
Into this era of lightnings and war ?  
There is no shelter, now or ever, from that answer.

### *THE RETURN*

NOW the soldier is come home.

He has fought his way back  
To the faces of the gnome-children  
With still magic in their glances.

Wearing the green birk in his hat  
And clad in the brown earth  
He has torn barbed sorrow down  
With his bare hands.

He has gone out into the open fields  
Superb, in final camouflage.

## *NIGHT FIGHTER*

SPACE is his own mind through which he flies,  
Commander of fire, still in the whirlwind.  
High as the hawk above the world he has pinned  
All his treasure upon these night skies.

There, voyage through a vaster dark must start.  
Man's sole propeller is his human hope.  
Winged are wishes, yet this earthbound heart  
Has measured desire and given mankind scope.

Coursing like Icarus into the cauldron of the sun  
He maps past, present and our future time.  
Fighting for breath in the upper air he shall have won  
Victory over the seasons even if he fall,

With autumn's ceremony of leaves, out of that last climb,  
To shed his own strange peace upon us all.

## *THE WARRING WINTER*

THE world exudes this death  
In a language of signs and seasons.  
Here it lies with the eyes of a moth  
On the eaten heart of a rose.

I write this under his sign,  
The crooked cross on a bomber-plane,  
While pagan heath and oaken  
Parliaments contract or crack  
Under the frost of palsy.  
Stripped and scattered, the drowned lives,  
Innumerable as leaves,  
Dance his rainy whirlpool.

All foliage, of tree or bough,  
Yields to the peering hunter,  
Whose tracks, invisible as winter,  
Bulge white and huge as snow.

With an iron fist our hour  
Strikes upon chilled air  
And afterward, sound ascends  
From the bell's icy throat.  
Though death lie all around  
Like lichen on a moat,  
From the frozen tongue, still lolling,  
Flows the living speech of the soul.

The fingers of this winter are scissors  
Rifling earth's innocence. His legs are straw.  
Fears are his birth. He is the scarecrow  
Standing amidst a pang of unkempt grasses.

## *ADONAI*

HOW if blood and water  
In his body come together  
Dissolution shall ensue.  
There shall be no issue.  
Flesh shall be a gusset  
Wherein blood and waterfall,  
Blades of parting shears,  
May wither into Lethe,  
All its mournful weather  
Shrouded in a mist of tears.

How yet pity and all passion  
Pray these two stilled hands  
May hold out consummation  
Of water and of blood.  
To calm that loud  
Tumult of the body,  
The loveless, yearless yearning,  
Twin to the blind and blue-lined  
Pulsing wrestler of the veins who scorns  
The patience and the grace of their libation.

How Moses and Elijah lay  
Dead in Jerusalem's streets,  
Felled by the blood of unbelieving day,  
Floating in the waters of the night  
For all to witness, quiet as lilies.  
Opening, cup-wise, in a cloud,  
Twin sons of thunder, when the stars  
Of Heaven in their pride  
Burst through the trees of Hell  
To set the cold and crucified afire.

How, out of secret Samothrace  
Stole the jealous Kabiri, guards  
Against all ecstasy, who curdle  
Milk and chill the youthful veins,  
Inviolate in their union ;  
Switching fertile water's aspiration  
Into blood's assassinate ambition,  
Dealing leopard, panther, gryphon, buckler and shield ;  
Or to a lion and a unicorn bringing truce  
Beneath a crown of mystic liberation.

### *THE DEAD LARCH*

A WILD wind, exulting, loud in violence  
Uprooting earthly happiness, laid low  
My larch whose every living hesitancy  
Has vanished from its leaves.  
Hoarse and dry they break, like tinder,  
And wander where the wind wanders.

Blind were the roots that fondled earth  
And bland as beggar sightlessness the path  
Tapped out, until rigidity told their touch  
Upon a stone. Then, barred was the search of each  
Slow tendril for invisible water  
And dim, diamond minerals that lit their night.

No sunken stars restored them heaven.  
They sank upon that barrier in vain.  
Older trees and dead had withered underground  
Whose blind reef, stoned in fossil, slew the blind  
Root in earth as sun-heat slew the living  
Leaflight in the air above.

## THE WHITE HORSEMAN

(for Henry Treece)

THOUGH others forget, we shall always remember  
The hush amongst the children when  
The white horse, prancing in his power,  
Sprang soundlessly over the sand of the arena,  
Galloping, galloping through our circus hours.

He left no trace ; and none could hear  
His hoofbeats as he leapt impatience  
Over obstacles, set at defiance  
The baton's command, or bars of a gateway's fear,  
To escape into night and the utmost distances.

With him, alas ! he bore my soul  
In the fragile ballerina dancing so well  
On his saddle. I watch for her through smoked glass  
When, soundless as ever among wide silences,  
He breaks through the screen of our philosophies.

O he turns upon the thunder of the black cavalry !  
He looms among the shoutings and the gestures  
Louder than Laertes of this brassy war.  
He shines immaculate drama through their raffry,  
Enemy of the devil and his legionary years.

## TWO SONNETS ON CONSCIENCE

### I

I WALK the inmost streets of a barren city  
Over waved floors paved with a still  
Sea-urchin grief, where ruin hovers, broken  
As callous rock, in a heart's house, or our  
Castaway soul, a high-and-dry hopeless weed.

The vultures of the dark leave off this offal.  
Eyes are their swag, and our most sacred seed.  
O marble is memory when colossal pity  
Purges in each face a frozen sea-horror  
I dare not utter ; within whose inmost consciousness  
Pour ceaseless waterfalls all echoing  
Reverberations where never memory was,  
Down streams more deeply silted than the blood we let,  
Where all conscience is a dawn in the very root of light.

II

HEAVEN and the stars may roof the mind we own  
Within, but this forever white light's constancy,  
A bright, sharp foam whose miracle is grace, is all we  
Know we lack and never yet have grown.  
Therefore I pace the choked roads of the heart  
Praying its wilderness of secret flowers  
Preserve their root there ; master a hard and plaster hate  
Bred in the bone and stone ; drenching with showers'  
Mystery dark lives, dark toils of evil  
And ancestral dreams wherein we shelter as in pits  
Until above us, on the morrows level,  
Roar the wild beasts bursting out of night,  
Tilting the hourglass of the conscience as they roam and fight  
Beside the tigers tearing apart this street, this heart.

*MONOLOGUE FOR LORCA*

THE sun, peeled to pieces like an orange,  
Litters the corners of Europe, so that  
It is day here and night there,  
Light in one land and darkness in another.

Your black bull, Federico, has charged the noon  
And, unbelievably, gored it through.  
Now it wears on one of its horns, sun, like a halo.  
The black bull, planted foursquare upon Spain.

There can never be dawn again until it is blinded or slain,  
The whole horizon laid as yoke upon its shoulders.  
We are afraid now to sing your songs, for  
Each one is a "banderillo" quivering in the bull,  
A glittering bright star-wound in the side of night.  
Together they dance a thousand reflections of the sun's  
Waves, made whole in a river of music, your people's river.  
You are dead, Federico, but this is no lament.

I am amazed instead to see a dead man's  
Fight for the sun in a desolate darkened arena  
Where the bull, blind with the blood of a continent,  
Exhausts itself rushing upon a ghost.

### *THE CONSTANT NORTH*

ENCOMPASS me, my lover,  
With your eyes' wide calm.  
Though noonday shadows are assembling doom,  
The sun remains when I remember them;  
And death, if it should come,  
Must fall like quiet snow from such clear skies.

Minutes we snatched from the unkind winds  
Are grown into daffodils by the sea's  
Edge, mocking its green miseries;  
Yet I seek you hourly still, over  
A new Atlantis loneliness, blind  
As a restless needle held by the constant north  
we always have in mind.

## MOSES

RISEN from his agony into the shadow  
Soon he shall receive the magic commandment  
Whipping the snake into a rod of will.  
All the desert of his being a meadow  
Running sweet with waters that were torment  
He rests his head upon the invisible hill.  
There are people to lead into an unknown land  
Discovered in his mind: people who are blind.

Even with him there is nothing they can see.  
He shall destroy their barren calf of gold  
And shatter all their futile images  
To bring them over his divided sea  
Into that country, new as it is old,  
Where they are brother to the gale that rages.

## PORTRAIT OF DAVID

OUT of a lightning void who clutched blue rivers  
Spins a shell-flower head on sea-screened floors.  
An echo coils an ear in Fingal's Cave  
Along whose flickering shores he plucked his eyes  
And hirples lighthouse space down pebbled chin.

His frowning knuckles doubling are the rainbow  
Clenching fists of cloudy Scottish thunder.  
Ribs, once wrecked ships sunk on a broken beach,  
Now swell a chest of treasure in screw sand, or  
Blast a southron air with Highland spleen.

Sabre-toothed, the tiger Hebrides thrust  
And parry sea. That sleeping lipline pins  
On space awakened purpose, is a mastodon.  
A gnarled kneecap, or an elm down a glen,  
Forge spring-knots for the kilted saunterers.

Out of the dark-green jar who grasped light arching,  
Hoards electric sun in branching arms.  
The mottled trunk-one, wrenched from silver birch,  
Remembers brindling Cluny in a Braemar storm,  
Fire-talk, venison, we happy winterers.

### *THE LIVING LARCH*

DAY'S blind winds may roar  
Upon you, like the sea  
Against a stubborn pier.  
They rouse you but to ecstasy,  
A river of light leaves, hoar  
Within your quivering walls,  
A fountain that never falls.

Night shall still these storm-amassing  
Winds and force their cloudy armies  
In a slow rout through space.  
I see your outstretched boughs  
Thrown over us, dark with blessing,  
And know their returning peace  
Can never, never cease.

### *LEDA*

SHE feeds upon light as the swan feeds,  
Reeds and the fish, among green dreams.  
She fights through fog where the sun bleeds  
White as the fume upon dim streams.  
She drifts with the swan where lilies rule  
Swift mirrors of war's immortal whirlpool.

## ORPHEUS

THE poet sings alone, where others flee.  
Plucking the strings of Heaven and of Hell  
In him the world chimes like a great bell  
Tolling grief and carillons of glee.  
This prince who kissed awake Eurydike  
Lost her to darkness when, instead of singing  
Fountains from the depths of history  
He wished to see what stars have seen and  
sing.  
Therefore he hangs his lyre upon a tree  
Whose shattered leaves of melody are token  
None may play where every string is broken.  
The poet sings alone, where others flee.

## THE TOY SOLDIER

ATTICA lives. Greece lives. And Rome.  
Toys broken by a child's barbarity still  
Live. How I remember my soldiers wearing  
Matches as wooden legs. Some had even two.

For me they were heroes, and also partly monuments.  
The lost limb lived somewhere. They could  
Recover it when they cast away the wood.  
Meanwhile they stumped about

Like humans pretending to be all alive.  
This was the first death. There were many others.  
None of them final for such a soldier.  
None of them final for what we only know as symbol.

## *GOLGOTHA*

CROW, wooden lightning, from a sky of thorn,  
O cross-ribbed Adam, tumbled hill of blood,  
While blinded shell and body's thunder churn  
My ear to worm-ball and tongue to lipless stone.

Our wound is night, bridged in the frigid hours ;  
God's manna strung upon a nail spins dawn  
In skull-tolled bell behind straw eyes, and hoods  
A set dog barking at the rat of heart.

One small sind in this ash blows up world fire.  
A struck prince launches legend at the dead,  
His healing voice the speech and severed core  
Of guttering earth, and the stilled tides.

Where forests are the history of man  
An eye of time is blinded by this bone.

## *INVERBEG*

SLICED with shade and scarred with snow  
A mountain breaks like Mosaic rock  
And through the lilt of mist there flow  
Restless rivers of pebbles, pocked  
And speckled, where moss and the centuries grow.

Tree, married to cloud as stem is to feather,  
Branches and straddles the convex of sky.  
Death is aflame in the bracken where heather  
Rears semaphore smoke into high  
Blue messenger fire through soundless weather.

Below, like bees, the ivies swarm.  
Cast in leaping veins, their trunk, a crippled  
Animal of thighs pounced from loch-water, storms  
The slated shores of the past into ripples  
Interpreting man's fretted cuneiform.

### *TIR-NAN-OG*

**A** MAN is born, a man dies,  
And in between are miseries.

In between he is alive  
But cannot be allowed to live

Since, body's hunger never fed  
The mind is never satisfied

And hands and feet and head and eyes  
Are hourly humbled to the knees.

A man dies, a man is born,  
And in between a burden borne.

In between, by force of love,  
A grief in life is made alive

Whose mind is more than satisfied  
And body's hunger always fed,

Whose hands rise up from feet and knees,  
Encircle head and rub the eyes.

## *BALLET DANCER*

ARE you a dryad from a tree  
A green nymph from the sea,  
Swan-in-air, love-in-air,  
Poised on tiptoe like a flare ?  
You are judgement through reflection.  
You are joy in recollection.  
Now the moon you cup your face  
And curving a finger, create space :  
Now dancing abreast of time, in the sun's fire,  
With a shadow-bow you make humble your desire.

## *PICASSO FOR GUERNICA*

FROZEN in the fright of light chill skull and spine  
Droop bone, shriek splinters sharper than the Bren,  
Starve Franco stroke and stave the hooves of bulls.  
I am the arm thrust candle through the wall.

Up cities crack firelaughter, the furious  
Minutes, and bark a ruin at man in  
His sealoneliness, hair rearing fin-rays.  
I am the spinning coil distilled eyes' iron.

Neigh, horse, terror through steel teeth and a thicket  
Of bricks ! Beam an eye-bomb, cellar, and stride  
Nerve, peeled pupil's enamel, rhomboid head !  
I am the tiled blind hand plunged bulb in socket.

Splint for the shiven shin, I foster man-trump out  
Of festered history, sprout pointed fingers  
Where an afterbirth is dung and rubble-teat.  
I am the world in an eyeball, axis of anger.

## *I AND THE EVENING*

IN every footstep of the evening  
Wrapped in a gold and silver silence  
I hear the sorrow of my brother Earth  
And see the Holy Dead stand round  
Breathless as the impotence of flowers  
In the great summer of eternity.

Our Angel Protector flutters vast blue wings  
Behind a tumbled babe in the clouds.  
Mounting the white horse of space he charges  
Like a sea upon the images of this world.  
Warning on the waters with his light  
His vision heals the refractions of their chaos.

In the dust of a moonbeam's time I see  
Blake and Socrates kindle glory.  
Creation is their fear become wonder, and Beauty  
Is all the great contemporary.  
Time is their honour illumining the Sun.  
The evening is a ray soon gone.